

When does your period come back?

The return of ovulation and menstrual cycles after birth varies widely from person to person.

- Research shows that **menstrual cycles are more likely to return after 6 months postpartum** if a parent is **exclusively breastfeeding**
- This is **normal**
- However, it *is* possible to get your period **before 6 months postpartum**, even while breastfeeding

Early Return of Your Period While Breastfeeding

If your period returns earlier than expected while breastfeeding, one common reason is **reduced overnight milk removal**.

- Prolactin (the hormone that makes milk) is highest **overnight**
- Feeding or pumping overnight tells your body to **maintain higher milk production**
- If your baby begins sleeping through the night **before 6 months** and milk is not being removed overnight, this may signal your body to restart your menstrual cycle

Understanding Hormones, Your Cycle, and Milk Production

Hormonal changes when your period returns

- Prolactin rises with frequent and effective milk removal
- Long stretches without feeding or pumping (especially overnight) can lower prolactin levels
- Lower prolactin can:
 - Trigger the return of ovulation and menstruation
 - Contribute to changes in milk supply

Your Period and Milk Supply Changes

It is common for breastfeeding parents to notice **temporary changes in milk supply** related to their menstrual cycle.

You may notice:

- A drop in milk supply **the week before your period starts**
- Softer breasts
- Lower pump output

This is usually **temporary**, and supply typically rebounds once your period begins.

What helps protect milk supply?

- **Feed your baby on demand at the breast**
- Your body responds best to your baby's suckling—even if pump output appears lower
- If pumping:
 - Pump **right before you go to sleep**
 - Pump again **after breastfeeding** your baby

What if My Baby Is Sleeping Longer at Night?

If your baby naturally begins sleeping longer stretches and is:

- Gaining weight well
- Nursing frequently during the day
- Appears satisfied after feeds

...it is often okay to allow longer overnight stretches without pumping. This is most common in parents with a **robust milk supply**, and babies typically make up for missed nighttime feeds during the day.

Calcium, Magnesium, and Milk Supply

Just before your period starts:

- **Calcium levels naturally drop**
- This drop can contribute to a temporary decrease in milk supply

Supplement guidance

- Taking **calcium with magnesium** (not calcium alone) may help support milk supply during this time
- Magnesium helps with calcium absorption and balance

Always follow dosing guidance and check with your healthcare provider if you have medical conditions or concerns.

Reassurance

- A temporary drop in milk supply around your period is **normal**
- This does **not** mean your body is failing
- Feeding your baby frequently and responding to cues remains the most effective way to protect milk production

If you have concerns about milk supply, cycle changes, or feeding patterns, reaching out for lactation support can help guide you through this transition.